



January, 1985

# **TARKINGTON PARK**

**Master Plan • Indianapolis, Indiana**

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of park master planning is to insure the coordinated development of a park site based on the physical resources of the park and identified needs of the community and surrounding neighborhoods. A park master plan is to be used as a general guide for the development of a park. The master plan proposes uses, identifies development concerns and neighborhood leisure needs, and contains sufficient narrative to explain the proposal.

In the case of a park that is already developed to some degree, there are limitations on the new development that can be proposed in the master plan. Many times, a master plan includes small projects that fill out the park's development and compliment the existing facilities. These projects may improve the efficiency of the park and enhance the user's experience, but they do not alter its general character or function. Tarkington park is an example of this kind of park.

Master plans will vary as to level of detail, but they will all be sufficient to guide development. The exact tasks which will be needed to develop a park master plan may vary, but they will follow the same basic design process as follows:

1. Resource Identification
2. Analysis of Data
3. Synthesis of Data
4. Plan Development
5. Implementation

# MASTER PLAN FOR TARKINGTON PARK

## ADDRESS

39th and Illinois Streets

## CLASSIFICATION

Neighborhood Park

## SIZE

10.5 Acres

## PURPOSE

A neighborhood park is designated to serve an area within walking and biking distance. Typically it will provide recreation opportunities for various age groups, families and special user groups.

## CHARACTER

Tarkington Park is an intensely used park that is oriented to active recreation: tennis, basketball, and softball. The facilities for these sports occupy the majority of the park's 10.5 acres, leaving only small areas for picnicking and a playground. The park is surrounded on four sides by urban development that includes residential and commercial uses.

## LOCATION

The park occupies a square block bounded by: 39th Street on the south; Meridian Street on the east; 40th Street on the north; and Illinois Street on the west. The site location map on the following page shows the metropolitan context of the park. The park is located at a point where four neighborhoods come together. These are: Butler-Tarkington to the northwest; Meridian-Kessler on the northeast; Crown Hill on the southwest; and, Mapleton-Fall Creek on the southeast.

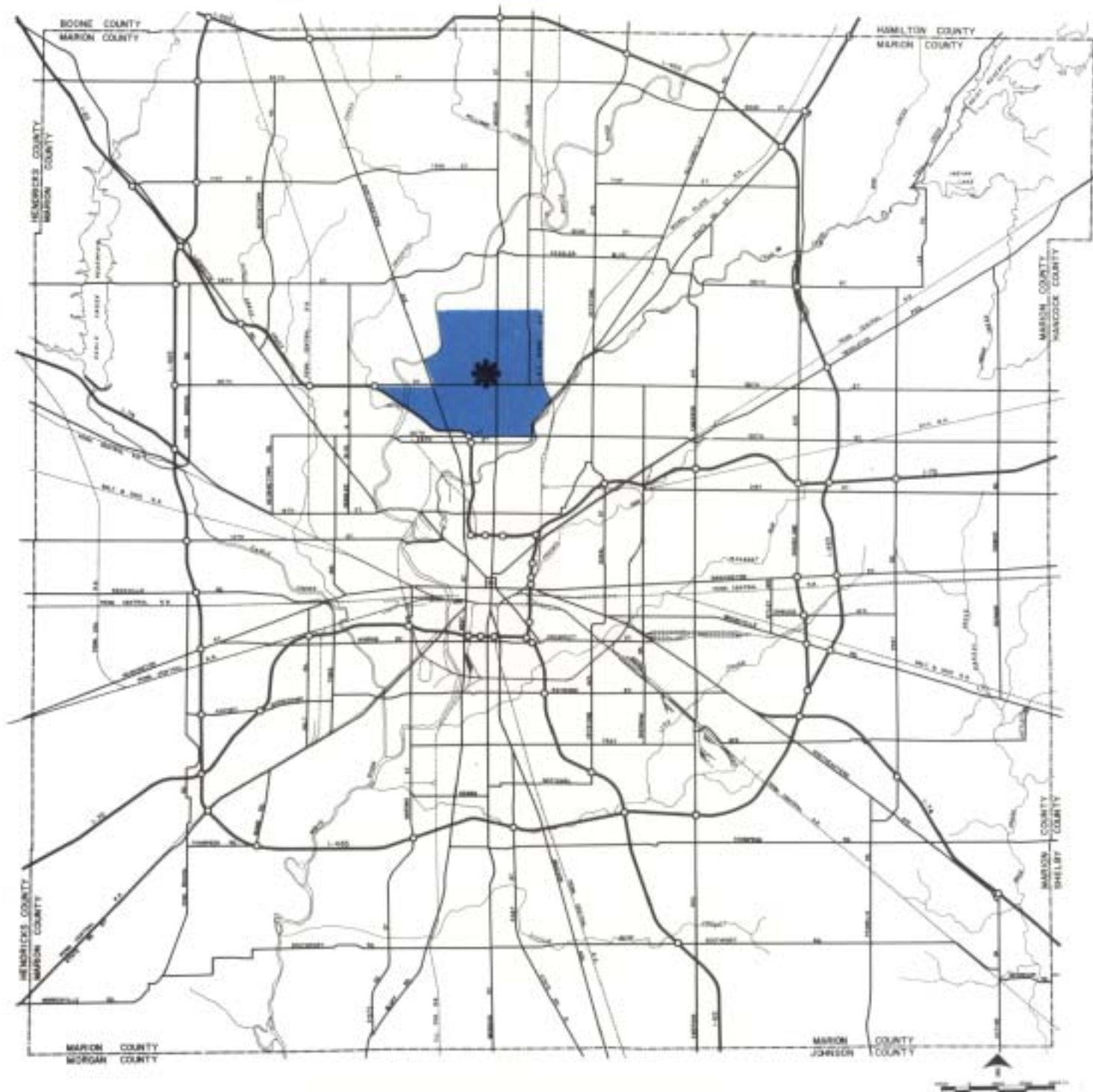
## SERVICE AREA

The sports facilities within Tarkington Park each have different service areas because of the variation in the supply of these facilities throughout the area. However, to aid the analysis of the park's service population, a reasonable approximation of a service area has been created. This is shown in Map 1.

## DATA ANALYSIS

### Population Characteristics

The characteristics of the park's service population has an important bearing upon the types of facilities that should be included in the park. Table 1 below presents some selected population data for the Tarkington Park service area.



# TARKINGTON PARK MASTER PLAN

## PARK LOCATION MAP



**Park Site**



**Park Service Area**

DEPARTMENT OF METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT  
JANUARY, 1985

TABLE 1: SELECTED POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS  
FOR THE TARKINGTON PARK SERVICE  
AREA AND MARION COUNTY

	Tarkington Service Area		Marion County	
Population Characteristic	1970	1980	1970	1980
Population	29,872	27,722	793,769	765,233
Change, 1970 - 1980		-7%		-4%
Population Density		5573/Sq. Mi.		1899/Sq. Mi.
Age:				
0 - 5 Years	8.5%	8.1%	11.0%	8.9%
6 -17 Years	22.6%	18.5	24.8	19.4
18 -21 Years	9.1	11.2	6.3	7.4
22 -44 Years	25.1	31.8	29.2	34.2
45 -64 Years	20.7	17.8	20.1	19.8
65+ Years	13.9	12.4	8.6	10.4
Median Age	NA	29.8 Years	NA	30.7 Years
Education: (Person 25 Yrs. and Older)				
H.S. Grad.	66%	70%	55%	67%
College Grad.	21	23	11	16
Median				
Family Income	\$11,186	\$20,085	\$10,819	\$20,819
Per Capita Income	NA	\$ 7,217	NA	\$ 7,677

SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population and Housing, 1970 and 1980.

As the table shows, the park serves a densely populated area, nearly three (3) times as dense as the county. As such, this has placed a great demand on the park and makes its importance as a recreation resource for the area much greater. Even though the Tarkington area's population declined by 7% between 1970 and 1980, the area is relatively stable when compared to other inner city neighborhoods, many of which lost over 20% of their population during the decade of the 1970s.

The median age of the park's service population is slightly below that of the county's. This can be attributed to the presence of Butler University, northwest of the park, which causes the 18 - 21 year old age group to be proportionately larger than that of the county because of students in residence at Butler. If these students could be removed from the age computations, the service area's age distribution would be very similar to that of the county with one exception. This exception is the elderly age group (65+ years) which is proportionately larger in the service area when compared to the county. The service area exhibited a trend similar to that of the county in that its school age population declined. This was accompanied by an increase in proportion of population contained in the 18 - 21 and 22 - 44 year age groups.

The presence of Butler University also effects the education statistics of the service area. The latter exhibits higher percentages of high school and college graduates than the county, though the county realized a larger percentage increase in high school and college graduates between 1970 and 1980 than did the park's service area.

Finally, the median family income of the service area is very nearly equal to the county's, though the former's per capita income is slightly less than the county's. The growth rate of the service area's median family income was also less than the county's growth rate during the 1970s.

#### Existing Recreation Facilities

The table below presents an inventory of recreation facilities in the Tarkington Park service area.

TABLE 2: PARK AND RECREATION FACILITY  
INVENTORY, TARKINGTON PARK  
SERVICE AREA

Total Park Acreage	39 acres
Acres of Park Land Per 1,000 Population	1.4 acres
Recreation Facilities	
Basketball Courts	8
Playgrounds	6
Ball Diamonds	7
Horseshoe Courts	1
Tennis Courts	8
Football Fields	1

#### The Implication of the Background Data for Tarkington Park:

- Population Characteristics--Though the park's service area lost population between 1970 and 1980, it is still a very densely populated area, so the park will continue to receive intensive use. Like most areas of the county, the service area lost population in all age groups except the 22 - 44 year age group. This age group expanded despite the overall population loss. This should result in a shift in demand from the younger age groups (school age: 6 - 17 years) to the young and middle age adult group (22 - 44 years). Though the elderly population declined in the service area, it still represents a higher proportion of the service area population than is found in the county as a whole, so this group should be taken into account in recreation facility planning. The education level of the area is fairly high even when Butler University resident students are removed from consideration, and the average household income in the area was only slightly below the county's figure in 1979, though its growth was less than the county's between 1969 and 1979. Recreation studies have shown that recreation participation rates are mostly explained by age, income and education factors. Generally, holding age constant, participation increases

as income and education levels increase, to a point. Age tends to have the greatest influence on participation. 1/ Based upon this criterion, one would conclude that the demand upon Tarkington Park has been declining since more of its service population occupies the older age groups than a few years ago. However, since the area is underserved in terms of both park acreage and facilities, there still exists a shortage of recreation opportunities in the service area.

## SITE INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

### Site Inventory

The park site is a 10.5 acre rectangular parcel containing the following recreation and accessory facilities:

- Two basketball courts located in the southeastern corner of the park.
- Three softball diamonds with overlapping outfields, occupying nearly one-third of the park.
- Eight tennis courts and an accessory clubhouse.
- A small playground located along the southern edge of the park.

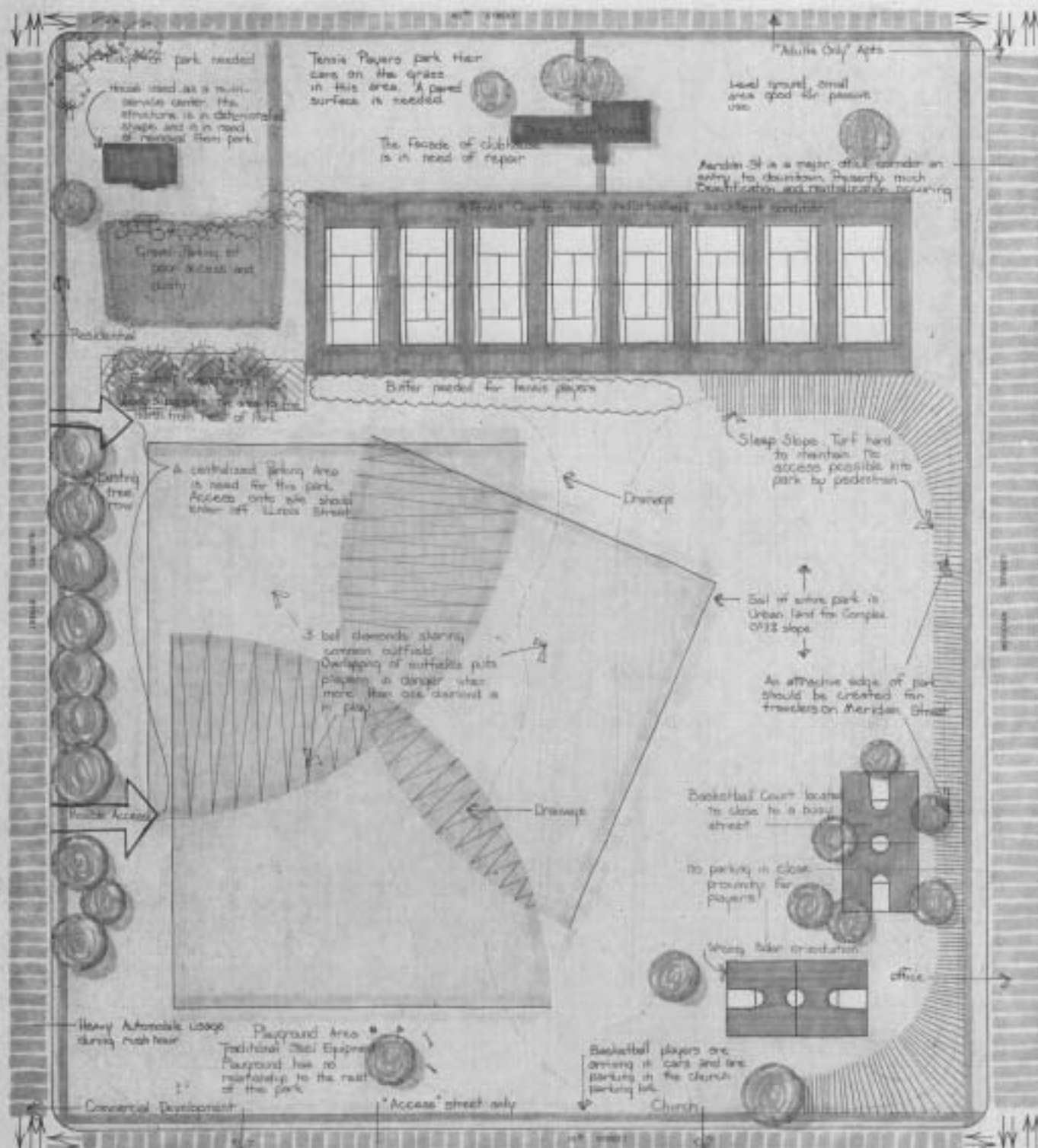
The exact location of these facilities are shown on a drawing of the park on the following page.

Since the park is an intensely used urban park, its natural characteristics do not play a strong role in its utility as a recreation resource. The site is basically flat, with less than 3% slope. Most of the trees on the site are located around its perimeter. There is a small group of conifers just west of the tennis courts. The remainder of the trees on the site are deciduous. The only soil type on the site is Urban Land-Fox complex. All drainage runs east to west.

### Site Analysis

A site analysis map (Map 2) is shown on the following page. The analysis shows the following:

- The only parking area within the park is a gravel lot in the northwestern corner of the park. This lot is inconveniently located and so is ignored by most park users. The lack of on-site parking creates problems both on and off the park site. Tarkington park is one of the most popular places in the area to play basketball, and so the numerous persons that come to the park for that purpose must use on-street parking or other private lots in the vicinity of the park. This situation has created circulation problems on the adjacent streets and generated some ill-will on the part of the park's neighbors. Users of the tennis courts frequently park on the lawn next to the clubhouse. Users of the softball fields also play a role in the parking problem.
- The outfields of the softball fields overlap, making it difficult to use all three fields at once, resulting in an inefficient use of space.



# TARKINGTON PARK master plan—Site Analysis



SCALE 1"=50'



- The eastern border of the park is Meridian Street, a major thoroughfare into the downtown. The Meridian Street corridor is the focus of a special document, The North Meridian Corridor Development Plan (Department of Metropolitan Development, 1981). The existence of this plan points to Meridian Street's importance not only as a thoroughfare for vehicular traffic, but also its importance as an example of what a good urban street should be. It is important, therefore, that the edge treatment along Meridian Street enhance the corridor's image from perspective of the auto traveler and the nearby residents, while identifying the park as a recreation area.
- The tennis clubhouse was once an open shelter that was later enclosed with plywood siding. The siding has deteriorated and the general condition of the clubhouse is poor. The clubhouse's need for rehabilitation is emphasized by the recent refurbishing of the tennis courts.

## OFF-SITE INVENTORY

### Area Land Use

Map 3 on the following page shows the land use around the park. In general, the area is a mix of retail, office, multi-family residential and single-family residential uses. There are numerous apartment buildings in the area, and so the park is a primary open space for many of the residents. Most of the retail and office space in the area is located along 38th and Meridian Streets. The zoning in the area is illustrated in Map 3. The proposed land use for the area is basically the same as the existing land use.

### Transportation

The mixture of multi-family residences, retail and offices creates a large volume of traffic along Meridian, Illinois and 38th Streets. The average daily traffic along Meridian Street is over 21,000 vehicles, while the average daily traffic along 38th Street is nearly 30,000 vehicles. Both thoroughfares are classified as primary arterials.

The park is served by two bus routes: one running east-west on 38th Street; and one on Illinois Street. These are shown in Map 3.

## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Development of the master plan design program for the park involved several groups, representing both public and private interests. Most important of these are those who use the park and live in its vicinity. In an attempt to obtain input from these groups, a series of public meetings was held at the North United Methodist Church, located just south of the park on 39th Street. Those that attended these meetings represented diverse viewpoints about the park's future role in the community.



## TARKINGTON PARK

### AREA LAND USE

- |   |                           |   |                      |
|---|---------------------------|---|----------------------|
|  | Park                      |  | Commercial / Office  |
|  | Residential, low density  |  | Public / Semi-Public |
|  | Residential, high density |  | Parking              |



NORTH

SCALE 1" : 500'

DEPARTMENT OF METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT  
JANUARY, 1985

----- BUS ROUTES -----

As a result of the input received at these meetings and suggestions received from the staff of the Department of Parks and Recreation, a master plan design program was developed, as shown below. Issues raised at the public meetings that influenced the final program will be presented in a subsequent discussion on the final master plan.

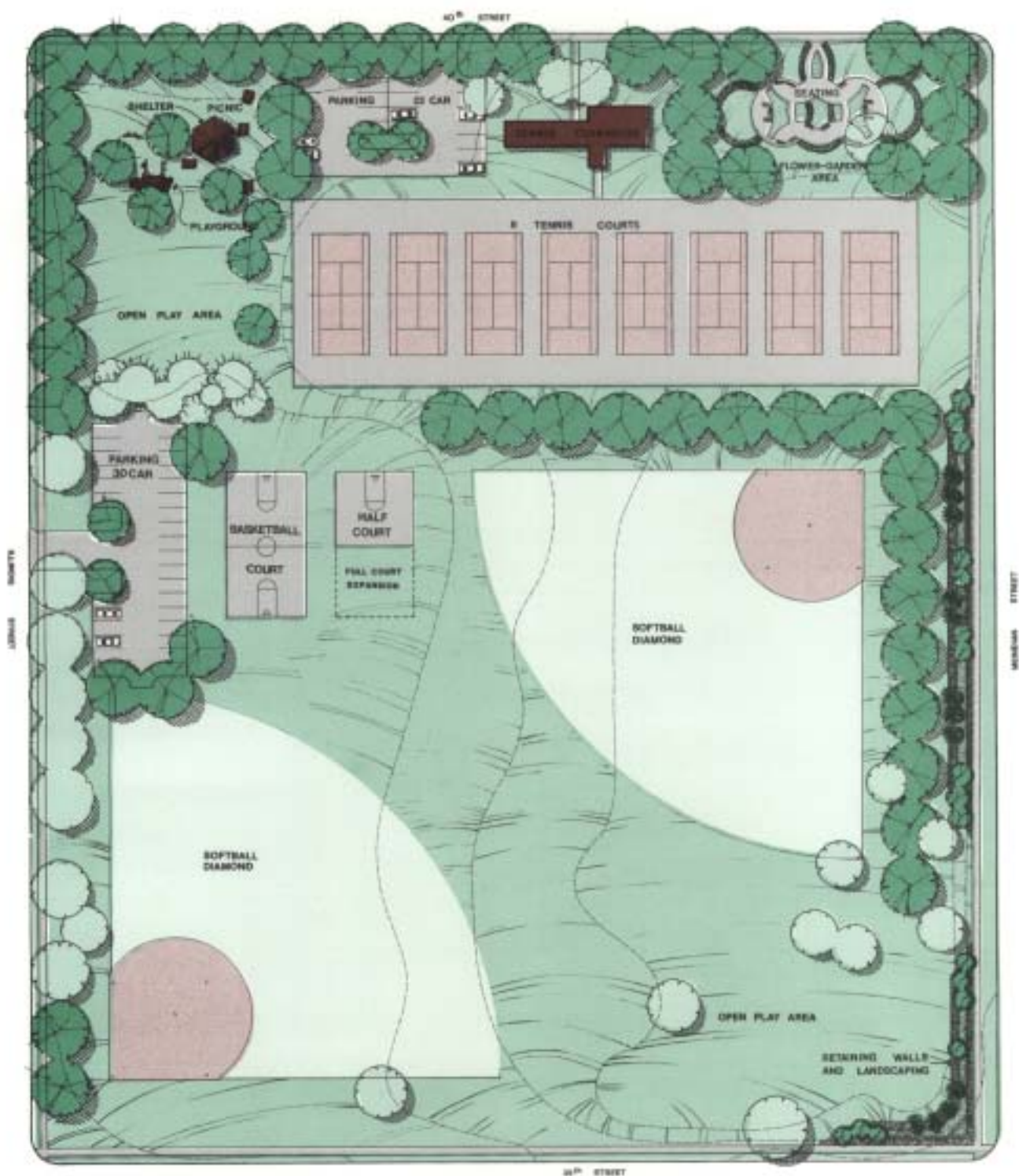
#### Program List and Relationships

1. Tennis
  - a. Parking
  - b. Clubhouse
  - c. Quiet Surroundings
2. Basketball
  - a. Parking
  - b. Solar Orientation
  - c. Interior of Park
3. Picnicking
  - a. Open and Shaded Areas
  - b. Shelter
  - c. Playground and Sports Fields
  - d. Parking
  - e. Residential Areas
4. Sitting Areas
  - a. Quiet Surroundings
  - b. Easy Access
  - c. Garden Area
  - d. Good Visibility for Security
5. Softball Fields
  - a. Site Topography
  - b. Parking
6. Playground
  - a. Picnic Area
  - b. Surrounding Neighborhood
  - c. Sports Fields

#### THE MASTER PLAN

Map 4 illustrates the master plan for Tarkington Park. In general, the park will continue in the same role as it has in the past, that is, an intensely used urban park providing facilities for active recreation and meeting a portion of the everyday recreation needs of the surrounding neighborhood. The discussion below presents some of the more detailed rationale behind some of the master plan's features.





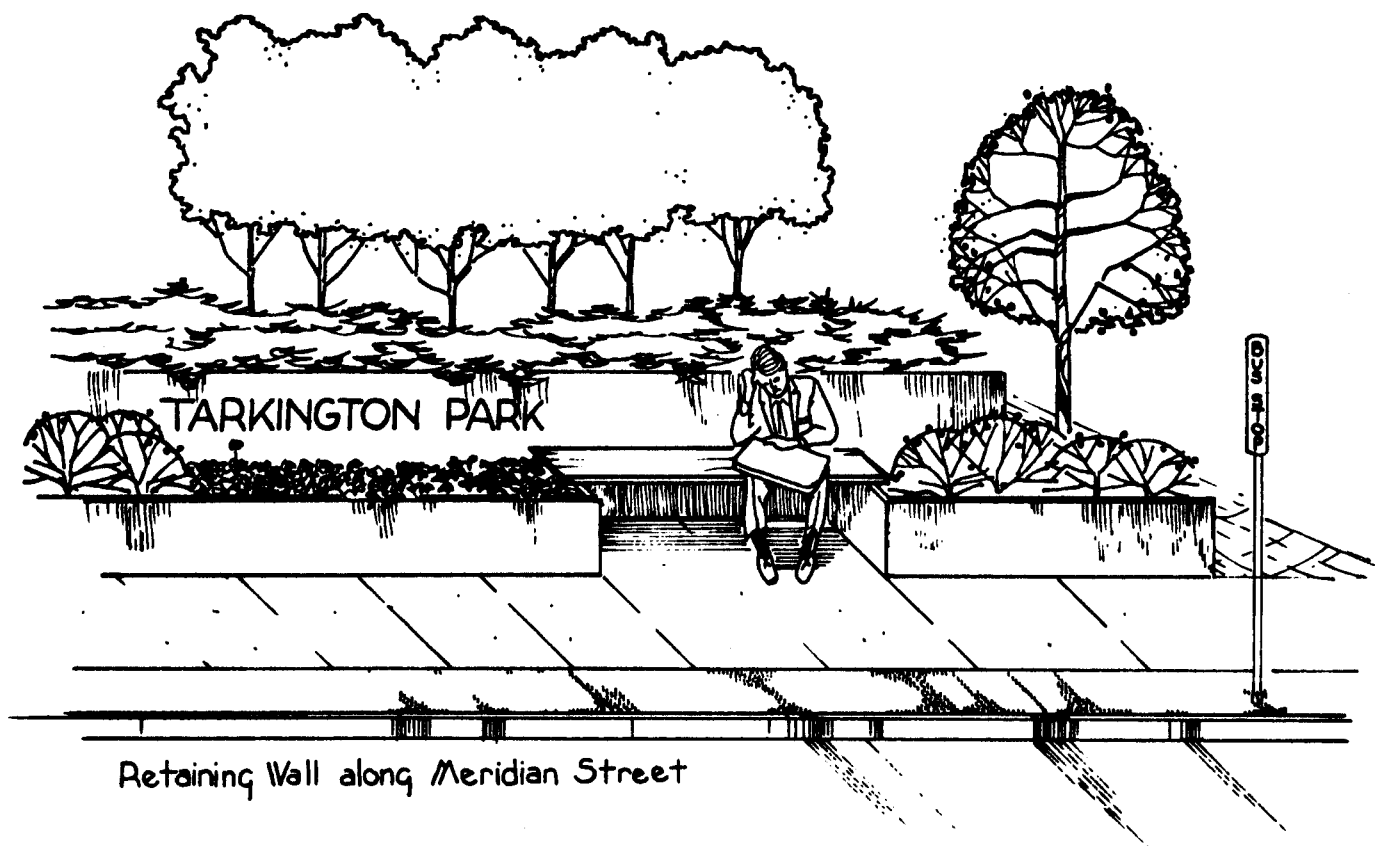
# **TARKINGTON PARK** master plan



SCALE 1" = 40'  
TPG

- . The residents of the area expressed the desire to hold family picnics within the park. This area is to be located in the northwest corner of the park, away from the active recreation spaces in the park, the commercial activities, and away from the busy streets of Meridian and 38th. This location also relates well to the residential areas to the west and northwest of the park. The picnic area is convenient to both parking areas planned for the park. It also has an adjacent playground and open play area. The picnic area will have a shelter and cooking grills.
- . The playground will be moved to the northwest corner of the park, next to the picnic area, from its current location at the southern edge of the park. The new location is more removed from the busy thoroughfares, and activities in the new playground location will not conflict with other activities in the park. This playground also has an adjacent open play area which can be used by picnickers and children. This play area also acts as a buffer between the picnic area and playground, and the other more active recreation spaces in the park.
- . Many of the elderly residents of three all-adult apartment buildings that face the park along 38th Street expressed a desire for a passive area separated from the more active recreation spaces, whose young users are sometimes intimidating to the elderly. This area will be a small flower garden/sitting area featuring more elaborate landscaping that is found in the rest of the park. This area will be located in the northeast corner of the park, buffered from the softball fields and basketball courts by the tennis complex. The tennis complex will also provide some diversion for the persons using this sitting area, in that tennis matches can be observed from the latter. Local neighborhood residents have indicated they will be willing to assume the major responsibility for planting and maintaining the flower garden, with assistance from the Department of Parks and Recreation. The detailed design of this space will be done at the time of implementation.
- . Two parking areas have been planned for the park to ease the parking problems identified in the site analysis. In conjunction with the relocation of some specific recreation spaces, the parking areas have been located to be convenient to the recreation spaces that will require parking areas is from the two thoroughfares that have the lowest traffic volumes. It is strongly recommended that the tennis parking lot be lighted since the courts are lighted and will be used after dusk. Crime statistics for the park area show that the majority of the crime is connected to autos. Lighting will help discourage such crime toward tennis player's vehicles.
- . The basketball courts have been moved away from Meridian and 39th Streets to the west side of the park and placed closer to the interior of the park. The new location of the courts will have parking nearby and should eliminate some of the negative perceptions toward the basketball participants and spectators that are held by the park's neighbors. Additionally, the new courts will have the proper solar orientation (north-south). One of the new courts has been made a half-court, since many of the nearby residents felt that the courts attract too many players from outside the neighborhood. This half-court does, however, have the potential to be expanded to a full-court should the demand increase.

- . The new master plan proposes two softball diamonds rather than three since simultaneous use of all three current diamonds is difficult. Discussions in the public meetings indicated that two diamonds will be sufficient to satisfy demand. The proposed orientation for the diamonds also reduces the chance of batted balls entering the surrounding streets.
- . As was indicated in the site analysis, Meridian Street is an important thoroughfare from the standpoint of image. The master plan shows that the park's edge along this street is to receive special landscaping treatment to create a more defined and visually pleasing edge, as well as stabilize it. The sketch below is an example of how the edge and landscaping will appear. The master plan also shows that new trees will be planted around the perimeter of the park. These new trees will help define the other edges of the park, enhance the park's appearance as an open space, and provide some visual and noise buffering.
- . Although not directly illustrated by the master plan drawing, it is recommended that the existing tennis clubhouse be removed. This structure was created by enclosing two open shelters some years ago. Because of the nature of the original structures and the method used to enclose them, the resulting clubhouse has been unsuitable. It is recommended that the current clubhouse be removed and a new clubhouse constructed on the same site. This would complement the rehabilitation of the tennis courts done in 1983.



TARKINGTON PARK RESOLUTION 84-CPS-R-2

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DEPARTMENT OF METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT

David E. Carley, Director

DIVISION OF PLANNING

Eugene W. Lausch, Acting Administrator

PROJECT COORDINATION

Timothy P. Galloway, Planner  
Mark A. Bidwell, Planner

GRAPHICS AND REPRODUCTION

Philip Pettit, Superintendent  
Kenneth Percy, Printing Supervisor

